



Reenvisioning Clifford in *The House of the Seven Gables*

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Abstract:

Most critics see Nathaniel Hawthorne's characters as largely two dimensional, rarely developing significantly. Clifford Pyncheon, in *The House of the Seven Gables*, is overwhelmingly considered to be an example of Hawthorne's static character design. An unbiased examination, however, reveals that Clifford does undergo a clear developmental arc, calling into question the conventional view.



Research:

A thorough review of Hawthorne's Journals, biographies of Hawthorne, and criticism will shed light on Hawthorne, Clifford, and the romance's meaning. This supplements a close rhetorical, contextual, and structuralist analysis of inter-related passages of the novel itself.



Objectives:

To ascertain a greater understanding of Clifford's character. To locate in the critical literature acknowledged instances of development and to identify in the novel clear evidence of development, with or without critical corroboration. Finally, to discuss the implications of this development for an overall understanding of the novel.

Conclusion:

Clifford shows a clear developmental arc over the course of the novel. Starting off as childish and isolated, Clifford moves to mania and instability before finally settling on a final plane, closer to fully human than he had ever been before. Acknowledgment of Clifford's growth allows for a deeper understanding of the novel's central ideas and development.

Works Cited:

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